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# Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic

## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2217 (2015), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 30 April 2016 and requested me to report to the Council every four months. The report provides an update on the situation prevailing in the Central African Republic from the date of issuance of my previous report, 30 November 2015 (S/2015/918), to 15 March 2016, and on the implementation of the mandate of MINUSCA.

## II. Major developments

### A. Political and electoral developments

2. During the reporting period, the Central African Republic achieved significant milestones in its political transition, most notably the peaceful and successful holding of a constitutional referendum on 13 December and legislative and presidential elections in December, February and March.

3. The electoral period was marked throughout the country by generally peaceful campaigning by candidates and their supporters in accordance with the code of good conduct signed by all presidential candidates and political parties on 9 and 12 December. With the exception of security incidents that occurred during the referendum, in which 28 victims were injured, and pending the completion of the electoral process, the successive election days were free of violence. The African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) deployed observer missions and issued preliminary reports welcoming the generally peaceful nature of the polls. The International Organization of la Francophonie deployed a small observation team in Bangui. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation also deployed its Special Envoy for the Central African Republic.

4. MINUSCA and members of the United Nations country team undertook, with national and international partners, a series of activities to promote a political and security environment conducive to the holding of the elections, including support for the development and dissemination of the code of good conduct, training for



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political party election monitors and information sessions for presidential candidates with the National Electoral Authority. MINUSCA also held informal meetings with presidential and legislative candidates throughout the country and facilitated meetings between the Coordination Group for the Preparation of and Follow-up to the Meetings of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic and candidates to impress on them the importance of issue-based campaigns responding to the aspirations of Central Africans, including with regard to the implementation of the recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation.

5. The constitutional referendum held on 13 December led to the adoption of the new Constitution, with 93 per cent voting in favour. On 24 December, following the announcement by the National Electoral Authority of the provisional results of the referendum on 17 December, the Transitional Constitutional Court proclaimed the final results of the referendum, with no appeals registered.

6. The Transitional Constitutional Court ruled on the eligibility of all presidential applications on 8 December. The Court invalidated 14 applications for the presidential race, including those of former President François Bozizé and anti-balaka leader Patrice Edouard Ngaïssona. Subsequently, the National Electoral Authority issued the lists of 30 presidential candidates (including one woman) and 1,643 legislative candidates (including 175 women) on 8 and 16 December, respectively.

7. Following a three-day postponement, the first round of presidential and legislative elections was held on 30 December in a largely calm atmosphere, with a voter turnout of 62.3 per cent. The Transitional Constitutional Court validated the provisional results of the first round on 25 January. With regard to the legislative elections, regarding which 415 appeals were registered, the Court annulled the results and announced that a new first round would need to be held. The appeals concerned mainly alleged misconduct by National Electoral Authority field personnel, candidates, local authorities, militias and armed groups, implicating them in cases of fraud, corruption and intimidation. Complaints also concerned technical errors regarding ballot printing and the voter register. Consequently, the National Electoral Authority suspended 17 district managers allegedly implicated in election irregularities and swiftly organized a nationwide training programme to improve the performance of polling officials.

8. The second round of presidential elections was held jointly with the new round of legislative elections on 14 February. There was a marked improvement in the overall organization of the 14 February elections, with the majority of polling stations opening on time with the required materials. The National Electoral Authority announced the provisional results on 20 February. The Transitional Constitutional Court registered three appeals regarding the presidential polls, all of which were rejected. The Court proclaimed the final results of the presidential elections on 1 March, confirming candidate Faustin Archange Touadéra as President with 62.69 per cent of the vote, and with Anicet George Dologuélé garnering 37.31 per cent. Voter turnout was 58.88 per cent.

9. The decision by second-place presidential candidate Mr. Dologuélé to concede victory following the announcement of the provisional results had a generally positive effect on the post-electoral environment, including among his supporters. While Mr. Dologuélé alleged that there had been fraud and other irregularities

during the second round, he declared that he had decided not to file complaints with the Transitional Constitutional Court in the interest of peace and stability in the country, and called on his supporters to accept the results.

10. With regard to the new round of legislative elections, the Transitional Constitutional Court received 152 appeals. On 14 March, the Court confirmed that 45 candidates (out of a 140-seat Parliament) had been elected during the first round with an absolute majority, including anti-balaka leader Alfred Yekatom, who is on the sanctions list of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic. The Court annulled the results in 10 constituencies, which will require the holding of by-elections. The new round of legislative elections saw a notably small number of women candidates elected and admitted to the second round. Only one woman was elected in the first round, and five women were admitted to the second. The second round of legislative elections in 85 constituencies is scheduled on 31 March.

11. Important efforts were undertaken by the United Nations, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to enable refugees in neighbouring States to participate in the electoral process. Tripartite agreements with the Governments of asylum countries hosting Central African refugees facilitated their participation. UNHCR provided logistical support to National Electoral Authority officials in gaining access to refugee camps and urban refugee settlements in Cameroon, Chad and the Congo and deployed registration materials prior to and during the vote. As a result, Central African refugees voted in the constitutional referendum and the presidential election in Cameroon, Chad and the Congo. The Democratic Republic of the Congo did not permit refugees to register to vote. The turnout rate for the first round of the presidential elections among the registered refugee population was 61 per cent, while the turnout rate for the second round was 40 per cent of registered refugees.

12. Financial constraints had an impact on the electoral process until the latter part of the reporting period. The funding gap was closed through an additional contribution of $1.3 million by the United States of America to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-managed electoral basket fund. Although an outstanding pledged contribution of $1.7 million remains from the contributions of ECCAS countries (Cameroon, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon), it is expected that the pledge will be disbursed in time for the completion of the last part of the electoral cycle.

13. In parallel with the electoral process, line ministries and other transitional institutions continued the implementation of the recommendations of the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation in collaboration with MINUSCA and other international partners, particularly in the areas of elections, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform. However, the Bangui Forum follow-up committee, chaired by the Minister of Defence and composed of members of the Transitional Authority, political parties, armed groups and civil society, remained largely inactive, although members of the committee served as election monitors in Bangui and the surrounding area.

## B. Reconciliation

14. The United Nations, in cooperation with international actors, continued to support national stakeholders in promoting reconciliation efforts. MINUSCA supported the participation of four regional directors appointed by the Ministry of Reconciliation in local dialogue and reconciliation initiatives. On 11 February, following considerable efforts to facilitate intercommunal reconciliation, the predominantly Muslim community in the third district of Bangui and the mainly Christian community of the Boeing district signed a "non-aggression" pact, facilitated by MINUSCA and France. The agreement permitted safe access to the Muslim cemetery in Boeing for the first time since the crisis had started three years earlier. To sustain progress, MINUSCA and UNDP undertook security and protection measures and are launching complementary projects on income generation, social cohesion, early recovery and rehabilitation in the two communities.

15. MINUSCA, in close coordination with the United Nations country team and relevant local authorities, carried out rapid-impact labour-intensive projects alongside other income-generating projects for youth at risk and for other vulnerable groups across the country to promote social cohesion as well as rebuilding and to foster trust. Through this initiative, ongoing projects in Bambari, Bangui, Bouar, Bria and Kaga-Bandoro are employing youth and local communities in non-skilled work to rehabilitate local infrastructure. More than 12,000 young people have directly benefited from the initiative.

## C. Security situation

16. The security situation across the country, although still fragile, improved during the reporting period, notably in Bangui. The visit of Pope Francis to Bangui on 29 and 30 November, as well as subsequent dialogue undertaken by the Muslim and Christian communities and others, led to a decrease in tension and violence in Bangui and throughout the country. The intercommunal rapprochement prompted by the Pope's visit brought to an end the isolation of the Muslim enclave in the PK-5 neighbourhood of Bangui, outside of which community members had been unable to move freely and safely.

17. Crimes such as murder, torture, sexual violence, theft, abduction, destruction of property and illegal possession of weapons continued throughout the country. MINUSCA established an operational and situational awareness system in December to enhance information-gathering and build a database on key events and incidents, including conflict-related sexual violence. The robust approach and rapid intervention carried out by MINUSCA, with the support of the French Sangaris force, in securing the electoral process contributed to an improvement in the overall security situation.

18. Despite an initial attempt by former Séléka Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) elements to disrupt the constitutional referendum, the Mission's robust posture and pressure from the international community, in particular the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, led former Séléka leader Noureddine Adam to issue a statement supporting the electoral process, setting the stage for the peaceful conduct of elections in parts of the country still dominated by

members of the group. Activities and clashes between opposing armed groups, particularly elements of former Séléka groups and anti-balaka elements, continued with lower intensity. On 15 March, the leader of the former Séléka FPRC, Abdoulaye Hissène, was detained in Bangui, in conformity with an arrest warrant issued by the Attorney General related to his alleged involvement in the September violence. He was freed from the custody of the national gendarmerie by armed elements later that day.

19. The start of 2016 saw an increase in activity attributed to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the south-eastern part of the country, particularly in Mbomou prefecture, a mining-rich area. On 28 December, an attack by presumed LRA elements was carried out in the village of Chantier Azar, 65 km north-east of Bria, leaving two persons killed and one wounded. Following that incident, attacks continued to be carried out by presumed LRA elements on villages around Bria, including larger and less isolated population centres. The attacks have caused hundreds of people to flee from their villages in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures, with entire villages remaining depopulated. Former Séléka groups mobilized to respond to the alleged increased LRA threat, posing broader security concerns.

20. In response, MINUSCA established a Joint Operations Centre in Bria to enhance operational coordination and information-sharing among MINUSCA, the African Union Regional Task Force on the Lord's Resistance Army and the Special Operations Forces of the United States. MINUSCA also established temporary operating bases in Sam Ouandja, Ouadda and Ouanda Djallé; conducted increased ground patrols on the Zemio-Rafai axis, in Bangassou and Bakouma, on the Bria-Yalinga axis and in Obo; and conducted deterrent aerial patrols in the affected area. In addition, MINUSCA began collecting and investigating human rights violations in LRA-affected areas and established an integrated rapid-response team in Bria. The Secretariat also engaged with the African Union Commission to encourage additional contributions of resources and capabilities in support of the fight against LRA.

21. In the central and western parts of the country, violence associated with the seasonal movement of Fulani pastoralists began with the beginning of the dry season in early December and was expected to continue until the end of the season in May. This led to a deterioration in the security situation in the prefectures of Basse-Kotto, Mambéré-Kadeï, Nana-Mambéré, Ouaka and Ouham after mid-January. The most prevalent incidents were clashes between Fulani herders and armed groups (anti-balaka and former Séléka) over cattle thefts and grazing-related disputes, as well as tax levying. In Niem-Yelewa, Nana-Mambéré prefecture, the security situation led to the closure of schools in the area. In March in Bambari, Ouaka prefecture, armed clashes involving alleged anti-balaka, armed Fulani and former Séléka Union pour la paix en Centrafrique elements left at least seven persons dead and three wounded and caused significant further population displacement.

22. In the west, the security situation remained challenging, particularly in areas bordering Cameroon and Chad. Recent developments indicated increased activities by the former Séléka Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) under Mahamat Al Khatim, as MPC extended its area of influence towards the western part of the country up to the Paoua area. MPC cooperated with the armed group

Révolution et justice, which controls the northern part of Ouham-Pendé prefecture and parts of Ouham prefecture. Moreover, MPC extended its influence towards Ndélé, in the east, reportedly in order to control trade routes to Chad. Attacks on convoys remained a persistent threat along the main supply road from Cameroon to Bangui, although the number of incidents decreased during the reporting period. MINUSCA continued to provide armed escorts to commercial and humanitarian convoys travelling on that axis.

## III. Protection of civilians

23. The protection of civilians remained the priority focus of MINUSCA. In response to potential threats of physical violence against civilians during the electoral period, and particularly in Bangui, the Mission prioritized the development of a protection-of-civilians strategy for the capital and mainstreamed the protection of civilians into its integrated electoral security plan.

24. MINUSCA conducted a number of joint protection team missions, involving humanitarian actors when appropriate and feasible. In Bangui, a joint protection team uncovered new allegations of human rights violations at the M'Poko airport site for internally displaced persons, including sexual violence by former Séléka and anti-balaka elements, the recruitment of children by anti-balaka elements and sexual exploitation and abuse by international forces, which were swiftly investigated. In response to those allegations, MINUSCA established a series of mitigating measures in close coordination with humanitarian partners. Joint protection team missions were undertaken in the area around Paoua to assess and address the spike in intercommunal violence and criminality, as well as in other parts of the country to support a resolution of the tensions existing between pastoralists and farmers. In Batangafo, where significant population displacement occurred following tensions in early November triggered by the killing of two young Muslims, MINUSCA provided support for a weapons-free-zone agreement between armed groups and initiated pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and community violence reduction activities. The Mission also took steps to address the growing threat posed against the population in LRA-affected areas.

25. MINUSCA established a series of mitigating measures for the protection of internally displaced persons who faced threats caused by the presence of armed elements in camps and by repeated attacks or criminality. In Bambari, Batangafo, Kaga-Bandoro and Ngakobo, the Mission carried out joint military, police and civilian assessments of sites for internally displaced persons in close coordination with humanitarian partners. It also developed contingency plans for preventing or responding to internal displacement and initiated training in that area for uniformed personnel, including military field commanders.

26. MINUSCA initiated the recruitment of an additional 28 community liaison assistants, for a total of 52, to be placed alongside field commanders to support the development of community protection plans as well as coordination and alert mechanisms. The Mission developed a standard operating procedure on early warning, alert and rapid response and is progressively setting up Joint Operations Centres in all field offices to collect and share early warning information and alerts.

# IV. Human rights situation

## A. Violations by armed forces and groups

27. The human rights situation in the Central African Republic remained of serious concern during the reporting period. MINUSCA documented 269 new verified incidents of violations or abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed against 915 victims, including 53 women, 48 boys and 30 girls. The violations included arbitrary killings and cases of cruel and inhuman treatment, conflict-related sexual violence and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as arbitrary arrest and detention. The Mission documented 18 incidents of human rights violations and abuses related to allegations of witchcraft, affecting mainly women and children. Most of the violations reported were committed by anti-balaka (42), former Séléka (68) and LRA (29) elements and State authorities (80), including the Central Office for the Suppression of Banditry, the Central African armed forces, the police, the gendarmerie, the State intelligence service and State administrative authorities. MINUSCA recorded the injury of 28 victims during the constitutional referendum of 13 December, whereas no major human rights violations were reported during the presidential and legislative elections of 30 December and 14 February.

28. From 1 December to 15 March, MINUSCA reported an increase in human rights abuses perpetrated by presumed LRA elements in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou prefectures, as detailed in paragraph 19 above, including the abduction of women and children, who were often subjected to forced labour or sexual violence.

29. MINUSCA and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published their first joint report on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic on 9 December. A joint report was also issued on 21 March on the surge of violence that had occurred in Bangui in September and October. The report detailed human rights violations against civilians, including at least 41 who had been killed and at least 17 who had been injured, raped or subjected to other forms of sexual violence or kidnapped or otherwise unlawfully detained, as well as the pillaging, looting and destruction of property.

30. MINUSCA continued to support planning efforts by the Transitional Authority to establish a national commission on human rights and fundamental liberties and a truth, justice, reparations and reconciliation commission. During the electoral process, the Mission supported nine capacity-building projects and training initiatives aimed at increasing awareness of human rights protection in various locations across the country.

## B. Conflict-related sexual violence

31. During the reporting period, among the 269 documented human rights incidents, MINUSCA registered 39 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, 28 of which were investigated and verified. The 39 cases involved 49 victims, comprising 30 women, 18 girls and 1 boy. Thirty-three of the cases concerned rape, and 6 concerned attempted rape, forced marriage and/or sexual assault. Of the 33 cases of rape, 23 were perpetrated by multiple actors and 4 also involved abduction, forced marriage or sexual slavery. Eighteen of the registered cases were

allegedly perpetrated by former Séléka, 12 by anti-balaka and 2 by LRA elements. Eleven cases, involving 15 victims (7 girls and 8 women), await full investigation and verification. The actual number of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence is suspected to be much higher than the number reported.

## C. Child protection

32. From 1 December to 15 February, the country task force on monitoring and reporting, which is co-chaired by MINUSCA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), documented the killing of 3 children, the injury of 2 children and the rape of 11 girls by different armed groups. During the reporting period, the Mission documented 21 incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse allegedly committed by international forces against children. Nineteen of those cases, including seven allegations of rape, involved violations committed by MINUSCA peacekeepers against girls (between 11 and 17 years of age). The Mission recorded the abduction of 39 children (22 girls and 17 boys) during attacks carried out by presumed LRA elements in the northern and south-eastern parts of the country. Twenty-two children (12 girls and 10 boys), some of whom had been abducted in 2012, escaped from LRA. Sixteen of the children who escaped reported that during their captivity, some children had been used as combatants while others had worked as porters, cooks and messengers. Seventeen of the children have been reunified with their families after receiving medical and psychosocial support from international non-governmental organizations. Five others are still receiving care and support.

33. During the reporting period, 1,209 children (852 boys and 357 girls) were separated from anti-balaka and Révolution et justice armed militias. The children are currently receiving psychosocial and rehabilitation support through an international non-governmental organization funded by UNICEF.

34. MINUSCA carried out training and awareness-raising activities on child protection for 1,722 participants, including 977 peacekeepers and 745 external partners (non-governmental organizations, political actors, community leaders and members, and national security forces). The sessions were focused on the protection of children during the elections, the conduct of law enforcement agents towards children and the monitoring of child rights violations.

# V. Humanitarian situation

35. More than 2.3 million of the 4.8 million Central Africans still depend on humanitarian assistance. As at 15 March, there were 421,283 internally displaced persons in the Central African Republic, with more than 185,689 of the internally displaced living at 97 sites throughout the country. The highest concentrations of internally displaced persons living at sites were in Ouaka prefecture, with 61,024 living at 10 sites, and in Bangui and Bimbo, with more than 54,120 living at 30 sites. In addition, more than 460,000 Central Africans were refugees in neighbouring countries.

36. An emergency food security assessment that was conducted by the World Food Programme and its partners and whose results were published in January revealed

that the proportion of Central Africans facing food insecurity increased significantly compared with the previous year, reaching half of the population, or nearly 2.5 million people. The proportion of the severely food-insecure increased from 3 per cent in 2014, when a previous assessment had been conducted, to 15 per cent in late 2015. On 28 December 2015, the Minister of Health declared a monkey pox epidemic in Bangassou. As at 15 February, the authorities had confirmed 11 cases in that area.

37. Since the beginning of 2016, more than seven fire incidents have occurred at sites for internally displaced persons in Bambari, Batangafo and Kaga-Bandoro, resulting in the loss of shelter and belongings for tens of thousands of the internally displaced; investigations are ongoing to determine the cause of those incidents.

38. During the reporting period, the Central African Republic also witnessed the arrival of 7,000 South Sudanese refugees (mostly women and children) in the south-eastern part of the country. The findings of preliminary needs assessments conducted by UNHCR show that the refugee population is in dire need of humanitarian assistance, lacking access to water, health care and shelter, with reported cases of malnutrition. The area where the refugees are located is in an inaccessible part of the country, making it difficult for humanitarian actors to deliver assistance to refugee and host communities.

39. As at 31 December, the 2015 humanitarian appeal for the Central African Republic had realized only 52 per cent of the requested funding, representing a shortfall of $298 million compared with the total funding requirements of the 2015 Central African Republic Humanitarian Response Plan. In finalizing the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, humanitarian actors estimated that there was an urgent requirement of $565 million to meet the country's most basic humanitarian needs.

## VI. Socioeconomic developments

40. Economic growth in the Central African Republic in 2015 was estimated at 4.3 per cent below the forecast 5.7 per cent. According to the World Bank, average inflation eased to 5.4 per cent in 2015, with a projected rate of 4.9 per cent in 2016. After a sharp contraction in 2013, agricultural growth domestic product increased 3.1 per cent in 2015, with projected growth of 4.1 per cent in 2016. At the end of 2015, the State's fiscal revenues stood at $100.6 million, while primary expenditures had reached $181 million. State expenditures slowed owing to tighter control of non-priority spending and improved management of the payment of salaries. The disbursement of international budget support reached $95.4 million in 2015. External financial contributions in 2016 are expected to reach $163.5 million, leaving a funding gap of $81.8 million.

## VII. Extension of State authority

41. MINUSCA and UNDP, with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, continued to support the Ministry of Territorial Administration in redeploying some 1,000 civil servants across the country. The Mission facilitated the registration of the civil servants and the deployment by road of 427 of them to the prefectures of Nana-

Mambéré, Nana-Grébizi, Basse-Kotto, Ouaka, Ouham and Mambéré-Kadéï. UNDP committed to financing the deployment by road of approximately 400 civil servants and to mobilizing additional funds for the deployment of remaining civil servants to remote parts of Bamingui-Bangoran, Haut-Mbomou and Vakaga prefectures.

## VIII. Rule of law

### A. Implementation of urgent temporary measures

42. During the reporting period, MINUSCA arrested eight persons and reinforced its support for the investigation and prosecution of the most serious crimes, including those falling under the jurisdiction of the Special Criminal Court. The Mission also supported ongoing investigations related to political unrest that had occurred in September and October 2015. A Mission-wide working group, in close coordination with national judicial authorities, examined a list of 87 persons suspected of having committed serious crimes, including the 17 high-profile individuals being detained at the Camp de Roux annex of Ngaragba prison.

### B. Special Criminal Court

43. MINUSCA, UNDP and the United Nations country team continued to support the Transitional Authority in the establishment of the Special Criminal Court. Progress included the allocation of premises for the Court and the establishment of a committee to select national magistrates, registrars and clerks for the Court through a transparent and competency-based process. MINUSCA and UNDP assisted the Transitional Authority in seeking financial support for the Court, and the adoption by the Ministry of Justice of a United Nations project document is pending.

### C. Support for police, justice and corrections

44. MINUSCA, in coordination with the United Nations country team, continued to undertake capacity-building efforts and support the redeployment of justice, police and gendarmerie personnel throughout the country. The Mission, in cooperation with UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, supported the deployment of magistrates, resulting in the presence of judges and prosecutors in 24 of the 28 general jurisdiction courts throughout the country, as well as the resumption of court hearings in Bangassou and Bria. Together with UNDP, the Mission also supported the rehabilitation of eight courts and organized training sessions for the personnel of the Bangui Court of Appeal as well as for 65 magistrates and clerks. In February, the Council of Ministers approved the emergency strategic plan of the Ministry of Justice, developed with the support of MINUSCA and UNDP.

45. On 12 December, the Ngaragba prison reopened following the completion of work to repair the damage caused by the escape of nearly 700 inmates on 28 September. Some 225 prisoners are now incarcerated there. In January, the prison authorities agreed on a five-year training and human resources plan under which 1,600 required national prison officers would assume responsibility for the control of prison security formerly provided by military personnel. On 29 February,

44 newly graduated national prison officers were selected to begin four months of intensive on-the-job training provided by MINUSCA.

46. MINUSCA, in cooperation with the European Union and the African Union, began to provide support to the national authorities in developing a capacity-building and development plan with respect to the national police and the gendarmerie. The Mission and the United Nations country team supported capacity-building activities and the redeployment of national police and gendarmerie personnel to Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro and Ndélé, where co-location and mentoring activities carried out by MINUSCA are ongoing. The Mission also trained 2,689 police and gendarmerie officers on public order management, security during the elections, community-oriented policing, criminal investigation, VIP protection and drug law enforcement techniques.

## IX. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation

47. Important steps were also taken towards the preparation of a national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. In January, the Steering Committee of the United Nations-World Bank Fragility and Conflict Partnership Trust Fund approved an allocation of $200,000 to support the conduct of preliminary studies and assessments to shape the development of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation strategy. The Government of the United States also provided an initial pledge to support a national pension plan for members of the Central African armed forces, which will be essential to ensure an army that is right-sized, professional and representative and to free up posts that could be made available to absorb qualified and vetted demobilized combatants in accordance with the Agreement between the Transitional Government and the armed groups on the principles of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and of integration into the uniformed State forces of the Central African Republic, signed between the Transitional Authority and the armed groups on 10 May 2015.

48. MINUSCA continued to provide technical and logistical support for the efforts of the Transitional Authority to make progress on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation. New programmes for armed groups launched by the Mission to implement the Brazzaville and Bangui Forum agreements of July 2014 and May 2015, respectively, consisted of pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities carried out as an interim measure to engage members of armed groups until the launch of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. The enrolment of former combatants in pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities was aimed at supporting weapons collection and control in high-risk communities in exchange for food support. This entailed participation in cash-for-work and income-generating opportunities, implemented in partnership with the United Nations Office for Project Services.

49. The launch of these projects ahead of a national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme was prepared by MINUSCA, together with the national High Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform, through intensive sensitization activities

highlighting the value of pre-disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities in improving security at the community level. As a result, more than 2,400 armed elements, including 340 female combatants, were enrolled in such activities in Bambari, Bangui, Birao, Bouar, Bria and Kaga-Bandoro. The activities contribute to the reduction of violence in the communities concerned and attract economic investment as a result of the influx of cash into local economies.

50. MINUSCA, with the support of $3.5 million from the Peacebuilding Fund, continued to implement community violence reduction projects for armed groups not eligible for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, according to the agreement on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation reached at the Bangui Forum. Such projects were launched in Ouham-Pendé prefecture, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration, targeting 7,600 beneficiaries, and contributed to a reduction in violence there.

## X. Security sector reform and vetting

51. During the reporting period, the deployment of members of the Central African armed forces in Bangui, operating jointly with local self-defence groups suspected to be anti-balaka, raised serious concern about the stabilization process. While the deployments initially had a relatively positive impact on the local security situation, they were undertaken outside the formal chain of command of the Central African armed forces and without coordination with the international forces, creating a risk of further fragmentation of the Central African armed forces and undermining efforts to restructure them within the framework of a national security sector reform process. Moreover, a number of the Central African armed forces elements engaged in acts of extortion of the civilian population.

52. MINUSCA supported the Strategic Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform, comprising national and international partners, in implementing relevant recommendations of the Bangui Forum on security sector reform. From 3 to 6 December, the Mission facilitated a round table on national security, with the participation of 120 State and non-State representatives. Participants adopted a declaration on principles of national security that outlined a national security vision, including the main principles and responsibilities of security sector actors. Subsequently, MINUSCA facilitated the creation of a committee to draft a national security policy and provided technical assistance in developing a draft policy. On 17 March, the Strategic Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Security Sector Reform endorsed the national security policy.

## XI. Weapons and ammunition management

53. MINUSCA, through the United Nations Mine Action Service, destroyed 74 items of ammunition and explosive ordnance and 8 tons of commercial explosives, and retrieved 162 various explosives and items of ammunition. The Mission also rehabilitated the armouries of two national police and gendarmerie stations. In addition, it completed the construction of an armoury to store 1,000 weapons and conducted an armourer training session for 40 members of the Central

African armed forces. The Mission carried out awareness training programmes on the risk of weapons and explosives for 38,905 beneficiaries.

## XII. Coordination of international assistance

54. In the absence of an updated national planning document, the United Nations country team, in collaboration with MINUSCA, began developing an interim strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 to inform the development of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period 2018-2022. The Mission continued to chair the International Partners' Forum in Yaoundé, which also supports the mobilization of resources for the multi-partner trust fund for the Central African Republic.

## XIII. Deployment of the Mission

### A. Military

55. MINUSCA benefited from the temporary deployment of a quick-reaction force of 250 military personnel from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen the Mission's support for the provision of security during the elections. The deployed military strength of MINUSCA was 10,065 troops, or approximately 94 per cent of its authorized strength of 10,750. This included the deployment of 11 infantry battalions together with enabling units, including one military police unit, four engineering companies, one heavy transport company, three level II hospitals, three signal companies and three helicopter units, including attack helicopters. On 29 February, the repatriation of the remaining infantry battalion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was completed. The deployment of troops of a Mauritanian infantry battalion to replace the Democratic Republic of the Congo military contingent is expected to be completed on 1 April. On 27 February, the repatriation of a company of 120 military personnel from the Congo was completed. Although some troop-contributing countries made progress in improving the equipment of their contingents, disparities remained and continued to pose a significant challenge, including with regard to performance, for certain contingents that had yet to meet United Nations standards. The Mission maintained 52 operating bases, comprising 32 permanent and 20 temporary bases.

### B. Police

56. The MINUSCA police component comprised 375 individual police officers (including 42 women), or 93.75 per cent of the authorized strength of 400 individually deployed police officers, and 1,525 formed police unit personnel (including 81 women). The total deployment of the formed units represented some 90.77 per cent of the authorized strength of 1,680. Of the 11 police units on the ground, 8 formed police units and 2 protection units were deployed in Bangui, and 1 formed police unit was in Bouar. The remaining police unit is scheduled to deploy in April. The deployment of police officers outside Bangui continued, with officers present in 9 of the 16 prefectures.

### C. Civilian personnel

57. A total of 1,130, or 68 per cent, of the posts and positions for MINUSCA civilian personnel were encumbered, including 588 international posts, 355 national posts and 187 United Nations Volunteer positions. Women constituted 29 per cent of civilian personnel.

### D. Status-of-forces agreement

58. Regarding the application of the status-of-forces agreement, the Central African Republic authorities addressed a number of concerns and continued to demonstrate good-faith efforts to resolve remaining issues. These included clarification and streamlining of the modalities for ensuring an exemption with respect to tax on fuel; fees relating to the importation of mission equipment and supplies; a 2 per cent tax on the salaries and emoluments paid in cash and carried by civilian personnel when leaving the Central African Republic; and a registration fee of 12 per cent per annum on residential leases.

## XIV. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

59. United Nations and humanitarian personnel continued to operate in insecure conditions. Despite limited security improvements in certain parts of the country, there continued to be threats against United Nations and humanitarian personnel, particularly in the northern and eastern parts of the country and in Bangui. United Nations and humanitarian personnel and assets remained targets of attacks. Eight serious security incidents involving United Nations civilian personnel occurred during the reporting period, affecting 10 civilian personnel, with one injury sustained. On the eve of the 30 December elections, unidentified armed elements attacked MINUSCA uniformed personnel in the sixth district of Bangui, resulting in serious injuries (gunshot wounds) to three peacekeepers. In an attack carried out by unknown armed elements in Bria on 13 December, one peacekeeper suffered a minor injury (a gunshot wound). On 14 March, during demonstrations by students at the University of Bangui, one peacekeeper was injured.

## XV. Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

60. Between 1 December and 15 March, MINUSCA recorded 24 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse against its personnel, involving members of contingents from Bangladesh, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Morocco and the Niger and police personnel from the Niger and Senegal. In one matter, the nationality of the implicated contingent member is unknown. On 17 December, the high-level external independent review panel appointed by the Secretary-General to review the United Nations response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by international forces in the Central African Republic presented its report, which included a series of recommendations to strengthen the Organization's response to sexual exploitation and abuse. On 18 December, a day after receiving the panel's report, the Secretary-General convened a high-level steering committee including representatives at the Under-

Secretary-General level from all of the departments involved to review the recommendations and immediately begin working on their implementation. On 8 February, the Secretary-General also appointed a Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

61. In line with this work and the ongoing implementation of the Secretary-General's enhanced programme of action on sexual exploitation and abuse, MINUSCA undertook several proactive mitigation and prevention measures, including with regard to the repatriation of units and the withholding of payment to relevant contingent members while investigations were ongoing. These included the creation of joint prevention teams of uniformed and civilian personnel to carry out risk assessments and coordinate joint activities, including increased military and police patrols around MINUSCA force and police installations and out-of-bounds premises. The Mission's senior leadership visited high-risk areas and delivered strong messages to sensitize uniformed personnel regarding the zero-tolerance policy, prohibited conduct and the consequences of serious misconduct. Members of the United Nations country team joined the Mission's task force on sexual exploitation and abuse to develop a holistic approach to combating sexual exploitation and abuse, to coordinate assistance provided by United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and to ensure coherence, collaboration and communication with the sexual exploitation and abuse prevention network of the humanitarian country team. MINUSCA, in coordination with the United Nations country team, also developed an awareness and communication campaign. To support those efforts, an inter-agency/interdepartmental working group was established at United Nations Headquarters in coordination with MINUSCA to identify the most pressing areas in which the Mission required urgent support to address the Organization's integrated response to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel.

## XVI. Financial aspects

62. By its resolution 69/257 B, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of $814.1 million for the maintenance of MINUSCA for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. My proposed budget, in the amount of $931.0 million, for the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 has been submitted to the Assembly for its consideration at the second part of its resumed seventieth session. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of MINUSCA beyond 30 April 2016, the resources for maintaining the Mission would be limited to the amounts approved by the Assembly.

63. As at 7 March 2016, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for MINUSCA amounted to $137.7 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $2,788.9 million.

64. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 January 2016, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2015, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

## XVII. Observations

65. The holding of peaceful presidential elections represents a major milestone for the Central African Republic. The successful completion of the transition on 31 March will usher in a new era for the country. Hopes are high that peace will bring real change to people's lives, although the road ahead will not be without challenges. I applaud the Central African people for peacefully and enthusiastically demonstrating the will and the courage to open a new chapter in the country's history, and express my appreciation to the Head of State of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, for her leadership in seeing through the country's political transition. I would also like to praise the proactive involvement of the region in taking the transition forward. I congratulate President-elect Touadéra on his victory in the presidential elections, and I welcome Mr. Dologuélé's acceptance of the final results. I call upon the elected authorities to ensure that all of the country's democratic institutions are in place as soon as possible.

66. The President-elect now has the enormous responsibility of leading the response to the aspirations of the Central African people. I encourage all actors to work together in a collaborative manner to ensure the establishment of an inclusive Government and national institutions that promote the unity of all Central Africans. The recommendations of the Bangui Forum provide a consensual platform on which the future Government can build its priorities, without excluding or marginalizing any Central Africans or their communities. The future Government will need to focus on national priorities that are aligned with the outcomes of the Bangui Forum, and will have the duty to ensure that no Central Africans or their communities, including those who are currently displaced at home or refugees abroad, are left behind or marginalized. Divisive agendas as well as political and social intolerance should have no place in the country's future.

67. The gains achieved through the elections in the Central African Republic are significant but fragile. Indeed, elections cannot be an end in themselves. As underlined in my report on the Central African Republic of 3 March 2014 (S/2014/142) leading to the establishment of MINUSCA, while the country's future must be written by the Central Africans themselves, there will be no solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic without the continued active engagement of the country's neighbours and the region. The continued commitment of international and regional partners will be critical to support the realization of priority objectives that are nationally defined. I urge all national and international stakeholders to support the new Government in undertaking reforms that reflect the aspirations of its citizens for lasting change in the areas of governance, security, the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development, as outlined in the recommendations of the Bangui Forum. I encourage the Central African authorities and regional and international partners to develop a framework of mutual accountability for the country that can underpin a sustained partnership and longer-term engagement of the international community in support of the realization of those goals.

68. An early priority for the newly formed Government will be in the areas of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform. I urge the Central African authorities to prioritize continued dialogue with the fragmented anti-balaka and former Séléka groups to address the long-standing political, economic and social challenges that have fuelled armed conflict. Such a dialogue should be underpinned by a broad consensus on the country's strategic

priorities and be aimed at achieving a multidimensional approach that links disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and security sector reform, the restoration of State authority and the establishment of the rule of law, as well as income-generating and rehabilitation programmes, as part of a continuation of the Bangui Forum process. I urge all armed groups to engage in good faith in such an effort, and to commit to contributing to the strengthening of democratic rule and peace consolidation efforts.

69. I am concerned about the premature redeployment of the Central African armed forces. The long-term stability of the country will depend in part on an effective security sector reform process that transforms the national defence and internal security forces into professional, multi-ethnic, accountable and regionally balanced forces under the civilian control and oversight of democratically elected institutions. I urge the newly elected Government to collaborate closely with the international community to advance the security sector reform process and to reach an agreement with relevant actors on the terms and scope of the country's future defence and security forces. I applaud the efforts of the Transitional Authority to develop a security sector reform strategy based on the recommendations of the Bangui Forum. I welcome the adoption by national and international actors of the declaration on principles of national security outlining a national security vision. I urge the incoming Central African authorities to draw from those efforts and adopt a vision on security sector reform, as well as to fully engage in and support efforts to develop appropriate processes and procedures for the vetting of personnel in security and judiciary organs.

70. I welcome the planned transformation of the European Union Military Advisory Mission into a European Union training mission that will focus on training Central African armed forces units in coordination with MINUSCA and other partners. Such efforts should be complemented with sufficient international support for the Central African internal security forces to ensure a balanced presence of armed and security forces throughout the territory, based on security requirements. To that end, the presence of national police and gendarmerie personnel in Bangui and other parts of the country will also need to be expanded. MINUSCA will contribute to such efforts through strategic advice, technical and operational support, mentoring and co-location activities. In that regard, I welcome the efforts by national stakeholders, supported by MINUSCA and other international partners, to devise a capacity-building and development plan for the Central African internal security forces. I encourage other partners to enhance their support in that vital area, including in terms of equipment and infrastructure.

71. I remain hopeful that the momentum and the gains generated by the elections and the completion of the transition will encourage further progress towards national reconciliation, social cohesion and rehabilitation for the benefit of all communities. I urge national actors to promote reconciliation at all levels of society with the full participation of women and young people. I applaud the reconciliation efforts of religious and community leaders, in particular the agreement between the non-Muslim community of Boeing and the predominantly Muslim community of Bangui's PK-5 neighbourhood, which is aimed at ensuring safe access for Muslims to their cemetery in Boeing. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the newly elected President, the Government, civil society and all national actors in rebuilding not only a viable State, but also the social fabric of the country.

72. Efforts must be pursued to end the culture of impunity and to strengthen the country's justice system. I urge the incoming Central African authorities to fully commit to addressing that priority. The country's national courts and law enforcement institutions must be strengthened, together with efforts to establish the Special Criminal Court. I encourage the newly elected Government to take all action necessary to swiftly install the Court, including by appointing national magistrates through a transparent and competency-based process. I also call upon relevant partners to provide the critical financial and technical support required for the Court to function. I am encouraged by the progress made in support of the gradual redeployment of justice and corrections services across the country, which will remain a key area of engagement for MINUSCA. I call upon all the actors concerned to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes committed during the unrest of September 2015 and to proceed with the trials of those already detained for serious crimes.

73. I am deeply concerned that the percentage of the population facing food insecurity has doubled. Half of the population, or more than 2.3 million Central Africans, still depend on humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile, nearly half a million Central Africans remain internally displaced, with some largely Muslim populations continuing to live in enclaves in deplorable conditions. More than 460,000 Central Africans refugees in neighbouring countries have not been able to return home. I call upon the elected authorities, with the support of the humanitarian community and international partners, to increase efforts to create conditions conducive to the voluntary return of internally displaced persons and refugees and to ensure their access to food, housing, health care and basic education, as well as their safety and security. I call upon international partners to bridge the financial gap in meeting the country's most basic humanitarian needs and reiterate the need for all national parties to respect unhindered and safe access for humanitarian actors to assist those in need.

74. I am deeply disturbed by the continuing allegations of misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, by MINUSCA personnel and other international forces. I reiterate my determination to ensure that all United Nations personnel comply with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy regarding misconduct, particularly sexual exploitation and abuse. The Mission has established a transparent and victim-driven approach in addressing such cases, and I am committed to ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice and that their home countries hold them accountable. I salute the courage of the victims who have come forward to report allegations of serious misconduct by United Nations personnel. I call upon the troop- and police-contributing countries to take enhanced preventive predeployment measures, including by increasing their forces' awareness of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy and by ensuring that disciplinary action is always taken against any of its members faced with an allegation of abuse. The United Nations is taking a series of measures in line with Security Council resolution 2272 (2016) as well as with the recommendations of the high-level external independent review panel on sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic, which submitted its report on 17 December 2015, and is working to ensure that victims of sexual exploitation and abuse have access to the help that they need in order to recover.

75. The mandate of MINUSCA is set to expire on 30 April 2016. I intend to fully consult with the Government, once it has been formed, on the basis of a strategic

review of the Mission before making recommendations to the Security Council on the future mandate of MINUSCA. I should therefore like to recommend that the Council consider a technical roll-over of the mandate pending the installation of the new Cabinet.

76. I am grateful to my Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his tireless efforts in carrying out the Mission's mandate. I am deeply appreciative of the work carried out by the personnel of MINUSCA and the United Nations country team in a demanding environment. I am also grateful to my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, for the role he played in international mediation efforts in the Central African Republic. I thank the African Union, troop- and police-contributing countries, ECCAS, the European Union, the World Bank, international partners and multilateral and non-governmental organizations for their continued efforts to work with the population of the Central African Republic towards a better future.